

News from U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)

Assistant to the Democratic Leader

Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget

US House of Representatives – Washington, DC

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Contact: Chuck Fant, 202-225-5501

Shaw Clears First Cut, Avoids Pentagon's Base Closure List

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) announced today that Shaw Air Force Base is not on the base closure list the Pentagon released this morning. "Shaw has cleared the first and by far the most important hurdle in this base closure round," Spratt said.

Shaw is home to the Air Force's largest combat wing of F-16's. Shaw also hosts the Headquarters of 9th Air Force, the air component of Central Command Air Forces.

"Military value counts the most in this process. The Air Force has decided not only that Shaw is an asset, but one that it wants to build upon," Spratt said. Base closing includes base re-alignment, and Shaw is "re-aligned" to gain 742 uniform personnel and 75 civilian personnel, mainly the Headquarters of Third Army, now based at Fort McPherson in Atlanta. Third Army is Central Command's equivalent to Ninth Air Force.

"This is a tribute to the men and women who serve at Shaw and the missions they perform superbly. It's also a reward for our efforts to modernize the base year by year. We have rebuilt Shaw from top-to-bottom, and today we reap the benefits. In category after category, in a tough competition, the Air Force has scored Shaw above its peers," Spratt said.

"More than anything," said Spratt, "this is a tribute to the people of Sumter and the positive connection between Shaw and Sumter. Thousands of Air Force personnel have served at Shaw and left with abiding good will for Sumter and the warm welcome the city, county, and people give members of the Air Force and their families."

Spratt added that Sumter could not have fielded a better team to represent the community and its bond with the base than Mayor Joe McElveen, Former Mayor Steve Creech, Major General (Ret.) Tom Olson, and the BRAC committee. When they speak for Shaw, they speak well for Sumter and the community backing this base enjoys."

Spratt said the Pentagon's decision "puts us in good standing before BRAC, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission," but he cautioned, "the Commission still has the last call." He said communities with bases on the list "will argue with all they've got to

get off the list, and Shaw's posture will be re-examined. We move now to round two. We have to make the case for Shaw before the Commission, but we do have one big advantage in this round. Under the revised base closing law, seven out of nine commissioners must vote to add a base to the list, or to take a base off the list."

Next Steps in the Process

On May 16, the Commission will begin reviewing the Pentagon's recommendations and adding those of its own. By September 8, it will send to the President its final recommendations, which may or may not include changes to the Pentagon's list. If the President agrees with the recommendations, he will forward them to Congress by September 23. If the President disagrees with any of the recommendations, he will send them back to the Commission, which will issue a revised report by October 20. The President forwards the revised recommendations to Congress by November 7. Congress then has 45 legislative days, or until it adjourns, whichever comes first, to issue a joint resolution of disapproval, or the recommendations are deemed approved.

"This is not the last hurdle in the process, but it is the first and most important, and we have reason to be optimistic," said Spratt. "In previous BRAC rounds, the Commission went along with about 90% of the Pentagon's recommendations for major bases. This year, as I've said, the bar has been raised for changes to the list. Adding or deleting a base will require a vote of seven of the nine commissioners, instead of five required in previous rounds."

Community Support

Spratt said Shaw's success could be credited to many things, "but underlying them all is Sumter's support. Sumter has shown its solid support for Shaw Air Force Base."

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